



CITY NEWS

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**** Media Advisory ****

WPD releases findings from second data collection study

As a follow-up to its 2001 citizen stop study, the Wichita Police Department collected another six months worth of data in 2004 and turned it over to Wichita State University for analysis.

Dr. Brian Withrow, Midwest Criminal Justice Institute, analyzed the data that was collected between January and June 2004, and recently released the findings.

In the 2001 study, Dr. Withrow concluded that African-American citizens were stopped at a somewhat higher rate than Caucasians, Asians, Native-Americans and Hispanics. While the study showed a disparity with respect to race during some of the Department's routine enforcement practices, there was no proof that race-based policing was occurring.

The 2004 numbers show a 2.1 percent decrease in that disparity. The benchmark is based on the percent of the total population. According

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to 2000 census numbers, African Americans represent 11.4 percent of Wichita's population and in 2004, represented 18.6 percent of all police stops—down from 20.7 percent in 2001.

There were 25,418 police/citizen contacts recorded during the six-month study in 2004. Consistent with the 2001 study, in 2004 most stops were the result of an officer observing a moving traffic violation. As in the 2001 study, most police/citizen contacts resulted in the issuance of a moving traffic violation in 2004.

In 2001, 12.2 percent of all stops involved some form of a search. Stops involving African-American or Hispanic citizens were slightly more likely to involve a search. In 2004, the pattern was quite different. Racial and ethnic minority citizens were not more likely to be subjected to a search during a stop in 2004.

The most recent study also indicates that African American, Native American and Hispanic citizens are arrested at disproportionately higher rates than Caucasian, Asian and Other race citizens. However, a substantial proportion of arrests are non-discretionary, meaning that the arrest was due to an active warrant and the officer had no discretion.

The Wichita Police Department began proactively addressing the issue of racial profiling in 2000, and has made a number of substantial changes in how it addressed the issue of racial profiling, including changes in policy and regulations. A few of the implemented changes include a new policy in 2001 on vehicle/pedestrian stops; mandated training in racial profiling, customer service and diversity for all its employees; re-organized the Internal Affairs Bureau to make it more user friendly and renaming it Professional Standards, mandated officer reporting of any citizen who claims or infers that they were stopped due to racial, ethnic, or gender profiling.

The stop study, in its entirety, can be accessed at the Wichita Police Department website at www.wichita.gov. For more information on the study please contact Chief Norman Williams at 268-4158.